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Annie: Hi friends! Welcome to another episode of That Sounds Fun. I'm your host Annie F. Downs and I am so happy to be with you today. We are in a special series called Summer Lovin' at That Sounds Fun podcast series in which we want to restore hope and dating even today, and bridge all the helpful conversations, practical resources, amazing experts so that you start to see a real change in your dating life, like now and starting with you.

During Summer Lovin', we've talked about all different aspects of dating and each episode features a different expert. Plus, in most of the episodes, like today, we sit down with a single male and a single female, get their perspectives as well. And they, of course, don't represent everything about dating or every person's experience, but they do such a beautiful job telling about themselves and their stories and what it is like to date in 2023.

This series is not an all-in-one guide to every part of dating but it's a jumping-off point we hope that offers you some wisdom, some conversation starters and bridges you to experts and resources so you have something practical to walk away with. At the end of this episode, we'll make sure and tell you how to find each expert and how to find their resources.

Before we dive into today's conversation about breakups, this feels right, I want to tell you about one of our incredible sponsors. This episode is sponsored by BetterHelp. Okay, in our last episode, we talked about attachment theory. And it's one of those things that therapy can really help you with. I'm talking about it with my therapist a lot. Whether you already know your attachment style or you're trying to work towards being more secure in your attachment, therapy can give you the tools to better understand yourself and the why behind your interaction and relationships.

BetterHelp makes it so easy. Just go online, fill out a brief questionnaire, y'all know we love a quiz, and they match you with a licensed therapist. Finding a therapist that is the right fit for you is really important. So you can switch therapists any time for no additional charge so you're sure to be working with someone who is a good match. Plus, your sessions can be done right from home. It's entirely online and designed to be convenient, flexible, and fit in your schedule.

If you're feeling overwhelmed and don't know what to do with your emotions or just need help navigating relationships, therapy can provide the guidance to figure out what you need so you can better love yourself and love others. Find more understanding with BetterHelp. Visit betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun today to get 10% off your first month. That's betterhelp.com/thatsoundsfun.

Intro: Today on the show we are talking about breakups and we have a Summer Lovin' expert, Janice Gaines, with us. Janice is a Stellar and Dove Award nominated recording artists and speaker, but she is also a seminary graduate and a therapist and she's going to help us navigate this conversation about the not so fun but necessary topic of breakups.

Joining us are my friends Ryan and Katie. And you're going to hear us talk about some breakup stories, the emotions that come alongside a breakup, and the desire to still hold on to hope after a relationship ends. This is both a funny one and a tender one. But that's relationships, right? It's the yes and of all of it.

So here's my Summer Lovin' conversation on breakups with Janice Gaines and my friends Ryan and Katie.

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Annie: All right, y'all, you're ready to talk about breakups?

Katie: No.

Janice: Yes.

Annie: Thank y'all so much for doing this today. Well, welcome to Summer Lovin', the Breakup episode. I'm grateful that y'all are willing to do this. Let's go around and introduce ourselves. Ryan and Katie, we'll start with y'all. Just tell us who you are, what you do, how old you are or the age range, and are you single dating engaged. Where are you in the relationship? So Ryan, let's start with you.

Ryan: Okay. I'm Ryan. I work here for the advertising team, here in the offices here for That Sounds Fun Network, and I'm 32 and I'm single.

Annie: Great. Have had breakups in your life?

Ryan: Yes.

Annie: Katie.

Katie: I'm Katie. I also work here. I work at Downs Books Inc. as a content manager and I'm also a writer and I am 36 and single.

Annie: And have had breakups.

Katie: Yes.

Annie: Yes. Janice, come be our expert. Tell us who you are.

Janice: I'm Janice Gaines and I have been for the last couple of years, a porter at Porter's Call, Porters or counsels other recording artists because I'm a gospel recording artist as well and a Bible teacher. And I am 42 and married but still had lots of breakups.

Annie: Yeah.

Janice: Mm-hmm.

Annie: We're the exact same age. I'm also 42.

Janice: I'll be 42 next week. So yeah. How about that?

Annie: Look at us. High school in the 90s.

Janice: I know.

Annie: I know.

Janice: We did party like it was 1999.

Annie: That's right. That's right. I know how to do that because I lived it.

Janice: Exactly.

Annie: Yeah, that's exactly right. Okay, Janice, I mean, this whole series has been so hope-filled and so good for our friends who are in the dating world, but we've got to talk about breakups too.

Janice: Yeah. Yeah.

Annie: Are they meant to happen? Start us like a 101. What's the deal with breakups?

Janice: You know, I think breakups are pretty much inevitable unless you are deciding to never date. Because it's kind of like picking up a basketball for the first time and expecting to shoot every free throw. Now, I'm not saying that means people need to try to date a lot of people, but I am saying that there are different levels of relationship, which means there are different levels of breakups. So the more intertwined you are, the more painful a breakup is.

Annie: And does that have to do with time or investment?

Janice: I think both. I think both. Just like common law marriage is a thing because we acknowledge that if you've spent this much time with a person cohabitating, then we are now deciding you're married. So time is important, but investment, for sure. Like depending on how emotionally involved and physically involved you get with a person, then you're more attached to that person, and detaching it's just more layers to pull apart.

Annie: Yeah.

Janice: Yeah.

Annie: Okay, Katie, you know I've been dying for you to tell the story and Janice hasn't heard it yet.

Janice: We're going all in?

Annie: Yeah. I just think everybody needs a good breakup story to start off this episode.

Janice: Well, sure.

Annie: In my 42 years, this is my favorite breakup story. None of mine are my favorites. Yours is my favorite.

Katie: I don't really want that badge, but I'll tell you.

Annie: So I will say this is the what not to do breakup story. So this was I think 11 years ago. I had been dating a guy for about four or five months. So we were in a relationship and I had come to a place where I knew I just wasn't in it like long term and I was like, "I know I need to end this," but I was going along to get along, you know?

And he was supposed to come over to my house, I think it was a Sunday. And I remember thinking, "Okay Katie, you've gotta have this conversation today. It's time." And I even texted one of my good friends to be like, "Hold me accountable. I'm having this conversation today." Because otherwise, I would just keep, you know, coming along, which is not helpful to me or him.

So I thought in my head, I have a plan, he's coming over, it's gonna be great. He ended up calling and saying, "Hey, I just had this random idea. What if we go on the General George Jackson boat tonight? It's a great night and we could be, you

know, touristy Nashville people." So for those who don't live here, the General Jackson is a showboat. It's a dinner showboat.

Annie: Yes, it's a dinner and a show, Janice.

Katie: And this is the part-

Janice: Dinner theater on a boat. Right.

Katie: This is the part where I should have said, "No, let's stick with the original plan." But I was like, "Sure." So we go, we meet up at the General Jackson. And I know going into it I do not need to have this conversation here. Like, we are not doing this in public. I don't need to do this on a boat. Well, what I didn't realize is I was not acting myself because I was so in my head about needing to end this relationship. So we're about 45 minutes to an hour into a three-hour boat ride-

Annie: Three. Trapped on a boat, Janice. Trapped on a boat.

Janice: The men can't go anywhere.

Katie: And he starts asking-

Annie: He can go to the other side of the boat. That's about it.

Katie: That's right. He starts asking questions like, "Hey, something seems off. Are you good?" And I was like, "Oh, we can talk about it later. I'm having..." And he's like, "Well, is it your friends?" "No." "Is it work?" "No." "Is it us?" So then, you know, it unravels from there and we are stuck on a boat for another hour and a half. And he was not happy with me, very understandably, and walked off. And so I was like, "What am I going-

Janice: To where?

Katie: I don't know.

Annie: The other side of the boat.

Katie: I don't know.

Annie: That's it.

Katie: So I start texting my friends, I'm like, "Guys, do you know if this boat docks anywhere?" And they're like, "How well can you swim? I think you're gonna need a

shore." But yeah, we were stuck there. We avoided each other until it came time for the actual show part in which we got called inside. And I was like, "I'm gonna sit next to you. I know you're not happy with me, but-

Annie: Because they have seats they have to sit in.

Katie: Yeah, they're assigned.

Annie: Uh-huh.

Katie: So we just sat in silence, watched the show, and then I never saw him again.

Annie: That's brutal. Can you imagine on a boat?

Janice: On a Boat.

Katie: I know. I'm so sorry.

Annie: I hope he's telling that story too. No offense, Katie. I hope he's telling that story too.

Katie: I know.

Janice: You know he's telling that story a whole different way than she is. "She let me buy..."

Annie: "She let me pay."

Janice: I know.

Katie: We reconnected at some point over the years and he was like, "It's an infamous story in my friend group too." I was like, okay.

Annie: Good. Good.

Katie: "I'm so sorry." He's a good sport. He's a good sport.

Annie: Ryan, do you have a good breakup one I don't know.

Ryan: I don't. Not like that. No.

Annie: No.

Annie: Janice, Katie said 'going along to get along'. I mean, how often are we doing that when we should be getting out, especially as faith people?

Janice: I was about to say probably more often than not. If you think about it... I'm married now and from the moment my husband and I started dating, I was clear. Now, we had known each other for a long time. We'd already known each other for 11 years because we met as kids. But from the moment we started dating, I knew, "Oh, this is headed to marriage and this is what the Lord has and yeah, we're headed that direction."

Annie, it was so certain in every fiber of my being. I'm non-committal by nature. So even though it would make me nervous, I couldn't be deterred. I knew if it wasn't him, it wasn't anybody. So contrasting that to people I had dated before, it was kind of like, "Oh, well, let's see. That's a bit of at least a yellow flag, but maybe I can get over it." So I realized that, yeah, more often than not, we are prolonging something hoping that we can fashion it into what it should feel like to us.

But I definitely had a spiritual mentor tell me one time, and this ended up being my baseline. She said, "Listen, dating is as good as he's ever gonna treat you, is as good as it's ever gonna get, it's as good as it's ever gonna feel. He's not going to get more kind as a husband than he was as someone you're dating. So check out his character now. And if you can live with that character now, then you can live within a marriage."

And I started to realize like, Oh, there were character flaws that I didn't like in people that I dated, and I still had some myself that were like, "Oh, you're not ready to be in a really committed relationship." So if I had gone in with that mindset before, then I would not have spent as much time or have invested as much and the breakups wouldn't have been as painful to detect.

Annie: Now tell me the truth. Did you ever think with men before EJ, "This is headed to marriage"?

Janice: I thought, We should probably move in towards marriage. And the difference to me in that is 'this is headed to marriage' is... There's something outside of this that's leading us in that direction. As opposed to we would both like to be married and we think we are cute to one another. I think that's the next step when you're Christian is so you can have permission to do the things you want, marriage is the next step. As opposed to "this is headed" to "I don't want to actually live life without you, and so the way that I get to do that is to marry you."

Annie: Wow.

Janice: As a believer.

Annie: Have either of y'all had breakups that you thought, "I thought this was headed to marriage?"

Ryan: Absolutely.

Katie: Yeah.

Annie: And what happened?

Ryan: What happened in terms of-

Annie: I mean, you're not married to her.

Ryan: How the breakup...?

Janice: Did she tell you on the boat that?

Ryan: It wasn't on the boat. It was a long breakup, I guess, you could call it—trying to see if there were things that we could change or things that we could do. And ultimately what it came down to is just distance was one of the variables. It started in college. I graduated college, she had a year left and just too much time apart. I mean, that's definitely one thing that I took from that was having to spend time apart from people... not having to, but almost looking for that time apart for heart grows fonder. Not having been a part of our dating relationship through college... I mean, I'm on a tiny campus and we see each other every single day.

Janice: That's right.

Ryan: Breaks were either at my family's house or her family's house. Once that time apart came to pass, we just, both of us... that was the, I guess, cool part, if you could say that was a cool part, that we both kind of came to the understanding I didn't want to... the whole non-committal thing. I wanted to kind of offer grace to the situation and see if we could find a way to work it out. And it didn't wound up not working out. And she's married to the guy that was one of my best friends at the time. And when the decision was finally made, few months go by, nine months, I'd say about nine months go by and I get a message from him.

Annie: Wow.

Ryan: And the only thing that I could say was "Don't screw it up."

Janice: I'm sorry.

Annie: Me too.

Ryan: The tough part was prior to that. Once I got a message from him, I honestly smiled knowing that two people that I cared for found each other. And if I truly, genuinely cared about those two people the way that I said I did, who am I to try to get in the way of it? And all I wanted to do-

Annie: That makes me so sad.

Janice: You're better than me. I would've been like, "Oh, no, how dare you. And you."

Ryan: And other friends said the exact same thing. It was weird. I don't talk to them anymore. But no, it was one of those situations where I could either hold onto negativity or be upset and carry a burden that wasn't mine to carry. I just decided it was better for me to share the love that I felt instead of harbor any resentment or grudge.

Janice: Can I ask you a question?

Ryan: Yeah.

Janice: What did you do with that anger? Because it's there... not now. I mean, it is normal for it to be there. Like, You were one of my best friends, and this is only nine months ago. So by the time you're telling me, you guys have been seeing each other, and you figured out the time when somebody would tell me. So let's say six months. So six months from when I break up from the person that I was moving towards marriage with, my best friend, that is angering, and rightfully so. What do you do with that?

Ryan: I think there's a lot that went into that kind of thought process. I definitely didn't respond immediately. I tried to call him a couple times. He-

Annie: He didn't answer.

Ryan: No, there were things going on. He wasn't ignoring or doing any of that. He was busy.

Annie: He should be.

Ryan: And then got back to me. It started as a text, became a phone call. So there was a time that went by that gave me the ability to kind of put some thought into it,

realized that our intention for the relationship to go into marriage was premature. It was out of immaturity. Right? And I just came to the realization that maybe we were thinking too quickly. I mean, when you're in college, when you're on a college campus, when you're young, it's... not to say marriage doesn't come out of those relationships, but I guess for me, I'm a very impatient person and I'm ready to move quickly, and if I know I know. Some of those red flags were hidden from me.

Annie: Until you kind of got out of the culture of the school and how we do marriage here and everybody falls in love young.

Ryan: Exactly.

Annie: And once you got out of that, you were like, "Oh, hang on."

Ryan: I realized I wasn't ready. I realized we weren't ready. So the anger piece is I've found that it's a little bit out of the norm in the way that I perceive it, it's not mine to have. It's not mine to hold. Anger, negativity, I can definitely feel it, process it, understand why it's there, but that's not a weight that I ever want to hold onto in any situation. Outside of dating, in any situation.

It was one of those kind of early-year situations where I kind of was able to practice it and just understand that I want to be happy too, they want to be happy. How hypocritical would it be of me to say anything that would cause a rift or ripples in their relationship? I just didn't want to hold... I guess that's what it ultimately came down to. I didn't want to hold onto it.

Janice: But you did say you processed it.

Ryan: Yes.

Janice: And I think that's the key. Because you didn't have to process it with them, but you did process that, hey, because it had to have felt like a betrayal, which a lot of breakups end up feeling like, that's like-

Annie: Whether there's another third person or not it feels like a betrayal.

Janice: Exactly. We were making promises, we were making plans. So with that, I'm glad to hear you say you processed it and you just didn't have to process it with them, which is very healthy. Different people have their ways, but that makes sense to me.

Annie: Katie, have you felt like you were going to marry someone and then it ended?

Katie: I felt like we were definitely headed that direction. I can't say a hundred percent, yes, I was gonna marry him but I knew there was high potential. And actually that's the thing that broke us up was realizing we had gotten to a place where he no longer could think marriage. He just wasn't ready. And I was in a place where I was like, No, I could do this in the next year, you know?

Annie: Yeah.

Katie: So because we were on different pages about that, we called it. It was one of those where you're like, well, I have a lot of peace because that feels like the right decision, but also like that is so sad, you know? Because you saw the potential. So there wasn't just the grief of losing him, there was the grief of losing the hope of what could have been.

Annie: Janice, I see this is true... My worst one was the one where I saw all these ways God had lined it up and this is for sure him. And, oh my gosh, look, God is involved and he likes me and I like him. And then it ended. And I was like, "Whoa, not only is this a betrayal with this guy," I was like, "I feel like God has screwed me over in this."

Janice: I get it.

Annie: And I know that is true with a couple of my friends of going like, Man, I'm heartbroken this is over and I am really hurt with God. There are two relationships that sever when there are breakups for men and women who think they've heard God.

Janice: I think you're right.

Annie: Not sever forever, hopefully. Don't worry.

Janice: No. No. But I think at the center of that is this idea that really our expectations come from American culture and not from Christian culture.

Annie: Wow.

Janice: So we have melded the two, American culture and Christian culture, especially here in the Bible belt. But in reality, God doesn't tell us that we should each expect to be married, we should each expect to have biological children, or that we should expect to be homeowners, or that we should expect... Think of what I'm describing, I'm describing the American dream.

Annie: Of course, we should.

Janice: So we have conflated the two. We've made the American dream something that God has signed off on, and we start early on it. So we have created Christian culture around this American dream that we feel entitled to have. So we approach relationships that way. So I think that's how the two become a part of the breakup when it's like, "But God I thought you said..." because our starting point has been, God signs off on this, this is His idea. And He's like, "I was a single Jewish man in ancient culture."

Annie: No, Jesus didn't-

Janice: Jesus is not setting that precedent. That's something we've come to expect, probably, I would say since the 50s and 60s.

[00:22:21] <music>

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation to share about one of our amazing partners, [Thrive Causemetics](#). You guys are always kind about complimenting my eye makeup and I'm always wearing Thrive Causemetics' Liquid Lash Extension Mascara. It is my actual favorite. And considering it has 25,000 five-star reviews, I would say it's a favorite for a ton of you too.

Not only does it make my lashes look longer and four, but it lasts all day without smudging or flaking. Even if I'm, you know, crying over a breakup, it stays in place. Yes, please. Its nourishing ingredients support longer, stronger, and healthier-looking lashes over time. Plus when it's time to take your makeup off, it really is so easy. It's just warm water and a washcloth, no soap required and the mascara just slides right off. It is wild. It's the best-selling product from Thrive Causemetics, and I definitely know why.

I'm a big fan of Thrive Causemetics, you guys. Not only are their beauty products incredible, they are certified a hundred percent vegan and cruelty-free, made with clean skin-loving ingredients. I am here for it. Thrive's helping us stock our makeup bags with incredible clean, skin-loving products that make us feel like a million bucks, while also helping us help others.

"Cause" is in the name for a reason. As part of their mission, every purchase supports organizations that help communities thrive with partners that help people emerging from homelessness, surviving domestic abuse, and recovering from cancer, just to name a few.

You have to try Thrive Causemetics to see for yourself. Right now you can get an exclusive 20% off your first order when you visit thrivecausemetics.com/tsf. That's thrivecausemetics.com/tsf, like that sounds fun, for 20% off your first order.

Okay, did you know that we have over 2,000 of our friends going through Chase the Fun together this summer? Listen, it is not too late to jump in with us. We won't finish day 100 of the book until right around Labor Day. So you can either speed read and catch up or just go at your own pace or jump in with us right where we are. Any way you want to do it, jump in on the daily discussion that's happening with our other friends. There's a private Facebook group where everyone is sharing their thoughts each day. It is so fun and people have a lot to say.

It's like we always say around here, you are way more likely to finish the book when you finish it together. We finish better when we finish together. So just head to the link in the show notes and jump in. I don't know how your summer is going, but I do know that when fun happens, joy follows. So maybe now is your moment to chase the fun.

Now back to our Summer Lovin' conversation with Janice, Katie, and Ryan.

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Ryan: Do you see anything changing in regard to... So a lot of the American... that American dream is changing in the last 10 years.

Janice: Tell me more.

Ryan: Right?

Janice: Yeah.

Ryan: Our ability to go buy our first house, our ability to have kids and ultimately, at least for me, it's something I think about often is being financially capable to do those things. Take that step. And you mentioned the whole non-committal thing. Show of hands. If I'm not prepared, if I'm not perfect, then what's the point in me chasing after that, quote-unquote, American dream? And 'chasing after' is a loose term, right? I can work harder and I can go make more money. But if I'm not there, then I'm okay with the time, I'm okay with not dating, I'm okay with...

Because even initiating the dating part is a commitment too. You know, being a Christian man, that end goal is still a piece of like... I'm still kind of the American dream in that regard. Like, I want to get married, I want to have kids but our ability to do so is kind of, from my perspective, the time that it takes to get there is a little

bit longer now than it was in the 90s, in the early 2000s. Do you see a change in people's perspectives on that?

Janice: I have noticed a change. It's something my husband EJ and I have talked about that there are... when we were coming up in the 90s, people were not waiting until 30 to get married.

Annie: Right.

Janice: Now, EJ and I got married at 27, but we met at 15 and we knew each other that whole time and we're best friends and he would say, give him his credit, that he was pursuing me and I was like, "We're best friends, let's keep it that way." Until I got a clue like, "Oh, it's good to marry your best friend." But the non-committal me was like, "No, if we try this and it doesn't work, then I don't have a best friend. That's whack. I'm not doing that."

But I do see the, you know, people's timeline is changing. I feel like people are trying to figure out all of these questions as the American Dream and Christianity is being separated. Because I think this generation of young people like yourself, and I say young people, we're only a decade apart, but you and I were taught to be on a trajectory, right?

Annie: Yeah, that's right.

Janice: And something about this next generation is like, I'm questioning everything that I've been told. So it seems like it's taking more time because you're still parsing through things. But what I would say to that is, to truly come outside of this idea of the American dream, consider that God does not work inside of it exclusively. Consider vows. Like, rich or poor, sickness or health. Right? Consider that God wants to maybe pair you with somebody when you don't have it all together. Maybe that's a part of your sanctification.

And if we think of this as God is sanctifying me and he's using many tools. And I've gotta ask Him, is marriage one of those tools? And if He says yes, then I've gotta ask him about that timing. Because maybe it's right when you have nothing and she has nothing or you're not where you want to be and she's not where she wants to be and the Lord uses your story together to get you to the next place.

I think that's the true tearing away from the American dream, not allowing it to affect your decision at all, whether it's jump in and do it together or wait until I have it, and then we put it together. It's like that is a variable outside of what God wants to do, you know?

Ryan: Yeah. I think it comes down to the choice to work together in that. And it's the choice, I feel like, I'm in the in-between worlds, between the new generation, the younger generation coming up and the generation that had their eyes set and hearts set on the American dream. Right? Just hop in the van and tour the country and not worry about dating or social life or anything like that.

So being in between that it's finding someone that is willing to work through the things that are outside of our Christian lives, understanding that those things can be figured out, offering grace to people that don't have their perfect lives set up. But then it comes to the next... I think one of the points is if I'm offering grace to those things that are outside of my Christian worldview in this conversation, that American dream, if I'm offering grace in that, then how do you know that one of the things that I am after in my life that they don't necessarily have as a priority in theirs is or isn't a red flag.

Janice: Very good question.

Annie: So say you're dating somebody and the things that are most important to you are not important to them. Not Jesus. But snowboarding or being outside or serving the homeless community. I mean, you're dating somebody and you suddenly realize, Man, the number one thing to me isn't on their radar. Number one after Jesus.

Janice: Number one after Jesus.

Annie: Is that a "I can't do this" or is that a "we should push through"?

Janice: I would say, yeah, Jesus definitely is very important. Especially when you go to do more things in life, you're gonna want to be on the same page about Jesus. But other than that, I would say for each individual and couple to honestly ask the Lord. When I was in premarital counseling, I would go to a party and I was a wallflower. Not because I was necessarily shy, but I people watch and I am satisfied-

Ryan: You're a listener.

Janice: I'm a listener. I'm satisfied to stand and watch and listen and observe. My husband walks in the room, he wants all the attention. You understand? He walks in and not arrogantly, but he's like-

Annie: The party has arrived-

Janice: The party has arrived.

Annie: ...when EJ shows up. That's right.

Janice: And I dressed for it, so see it, enjoy it. You know what I'm saying?

Ryan: Yeah.

Janice: And that was just never me. And I remember our premarital counselor, our pastor at the time saying, "Now, Janice, you're gonna have to be okay doing social things because they really give EJ life." And I was like, "Okay." Now, at that point, I was a seventh-grade math teacher in the Bronx.

Annie: Wow.

Janice: I was not a recording artist. And EJ was a Wall Street attorney and so he was in an office and it was wonderful when he got to get out and go, you know, wear something other than his suit. I was dealing with kids all day and every day was different and I was happy to come home and be in pajamas. And now our lives look completely different.

My job is getting dressed up and putting on lashes and going and being in the room and needing to light it up and being okay with that. Even though I do like to, you know, apart from singing when I walk in a room, it's like, "What do I do? What am I supposed to do here?" And EJ is in an office where he is the motor behind people who are like artists and Bible teachers. So our lives have kind of switched.

Annie: Wow.

Janice: But if that was a red flag at first, then we wouldn't be here. So that's why I say it's about asking the Lord because you don't know the future and you don't know all of the things He's called you to. You don't know all of the things he's called the two of you to. So it's kind of like once again, see what He wants to do. And you won't know the whole future. But if you sense him giving you peace and telling you, "I promise you I can work out the snowboarding. That's not gonna be a problem." Because you never know what life will bring.

Ryan: So what were the characteristics then? So many people, I feel, they put so much weight into the other things. We've said snowboarding a couple times, I think it's hilarious.

Janice: I've never snowboarded.

Ryan: So if I'm interested in somebody that puts a lot of weight into the other things—we'll just call them other things—what are the characteristics that you focused on in that relationship? What are the characteristics that, maybe through

marital counseling, you were able to have tunnel vision on instead of the things outside, the other things?

Janice: I would say for me personally, it was EJ was my best friend. And even now it's the driving force in our relationship because I-

Annie: It's your friendship.

Janice: It's our friendship. Because I discovered that as a child of divorced parents, I have expectations around husbands and wives. And that's when I tend to be selfish and self-protecting and all of the natural things that I've had to work out in counseling and the Lord has sanctified along the way. I think in those moments I focused on: can I, you know, speak at a party next to my husband because he needs me to show up? Well, yeah, for my best friend, I can do that. That's no problem.

And if he asks me to snowboard, if that Black man asked me to snowboard, I'd be like, "I'm a Black girl from Memphis, the answer is no." I just say no. I would've been like, "I mean, I'll try it. I think we'll like break limbs at our age, but sure we can give it a try, best friend." You know what I mean?

Ryan: Yeah.

Janice: But I think it was that we focused on our best friendship and honoring God every step of the way. I mean, that's my personal experience. I mean, he asked me the other day... he asked actually on our podcast, "If I never put on lotion, would you..." Because it is a thing in the Black community like if you don't put on lotion, then your skin is dry. But because your skin is brown, it's visible. We call it ashy. And he was like, "If I was ashy, would you love me?" I'm like, "I would just get you lotion."

Annie: Wow.

Janice: He's like, "But if I was ashy, would you love me?" Like, Mmm, I would get you some lotion. You know what I mean? But you know, it's just one of those things where it's the best friendship I think that was premiere for us.

Ryan: Yeah, started communicating early on.

Katie: I was just gonna say I feel like the older I've gotten, the list that I had of, all right, you've gotta have all these things in common and you've gotta make me laugh and like blah, blah, blah, blah, I feel like the list has definitely gotten shorter.

Annie: But not in a settling way.

Katie: Not in a settling way.

Annie: In what really matters.

Katie: In fact, I would say some of the things have changed. Obviously, I'm looking for a shared faith and connection and chemistry, but also I care more now about your ability to communicate and your emotional health than I do about what we're gonna do on the weekend. Like, I'm willing to go to something that I think is boring if you can also communicate really well with me in a relationship. So I feel like between my 20s and my 30s, that's shifted for me.

Annie: There are some of our friends listening who have lost their best friend. Because they were dating their best friend and they were going snowboarding when they didn't want to and they were communicating as well as they could and now they are sobbing alone because their EJ did not marry them and is either out there dating other people or out there not dating other people or married to their friend from college. Give some hope to the people who feel like, Man, I was willing to do all of that and it is gone.

Janice: I would say the hope is that if your best friend is not there, then maybe you were their best friend and they weren't yours. So I think there is hope that there is somebody out there who will consider you the way you deserve to be considered. I would say wait for that. Because that's kind of the only way to do marriage. There's so many hours of sitting on the couch and just talking.

And it's like that person has got to have your best interest in mind. The person that you talk about finances with, the person that you talk about either trying to have biological kids or adopting kids or deciding to never do that with has to care about you and has to meet you in that same place. So I think there is hope. I think there is goodness in learning that you're willing to be a best friend. Because I think that's very important.

Annie: Yeah. Learning that you did love and you can love.

Janice: Learning that you did love and you can love. But just because someone wasn't able to do that back to the same degree doesn't mean that that person doesn't exist. And then also there are... I don't want to make marriage seem like the ultimate goal either. Because some people will live a life that is single. And with that, there will be versions of best friends along the way that bring that same hope and it will not include certain things that marriage does include, but it doesn't mean that you will not be loved.

And I think there's a fear among us in this country that if we aren't married, then we're not loved. And it's like that's not true. The Christian community, we've not done a great job of saying, "Hey, you're a part of us. We love you. You're important to us. And you don't have to bring a partner to prove it."

Annie: So our mutual friends, Lady A, have a song that ruins my life. It's the *What If I Never Get Over You* song.

Janice: Whoo.

Katie: Oh yeah.

Annie: Oh, it is... Oh, I mean, it will mess you up even on your best day.

Janice: That's right.

Annie: If you're married with eight kids, that song can make you cry. Is there a world where there will be people we never get over?

Janice: I think that would be the equivalent of saying that God cannot heal a wound. Right?

Annie: Wow.

Janice: That God cannot heal a wound, that God does not give us beauty for ashes. So I can't say that there's a world where there's a person that we don't get over. Now, I will say that you may have to do some practical things to manage getting over.

Annie: Of Course, you gotta block them on the socials.

Janice: Block them. That's definitely where it starts where you don't have to see them all of the time. But also if you're no longer attached to the person, that maintenance of actually continue to detach and pull, it's like a box in your closet that has their stuff in it. Go ahead and get rid of that. Well, you're doing the same thing with your heart. It's taking the space that they've occupied and deciding they don't get to occupy it anymore. So I think that's the work that we have to do. And we have to want to do it. And then we have to maintain it. Especially the more people have invested, the more physical people have gotten, the more attached people have gotten emotionally and physically, you're gonna have to work to clean that out basically.

Annie: Is that true? Does sex change breakups?

Janice: Absolutely.

Annie: Does living together change breakups?

Janice: Absolutely. Absolutely. Sex definitely changes breakups. I mean psychologically, even the science will tell you that once you have had sex with a person, you see them differently, especially a woman.

Annie: Wow.

Janice: So it's kind of like it's designed that way. It's designed to be that intimate. And it's designed to be in such a commitment that, yes, I chose you, you chose me, we're not going anywhere. So this is a safe place to be as vulnerable as possible. It is as vulnerable as you can be physically. So, yes, it changes the breakup and it makes it infinitely harder. But it doesn't mean that you can't get over the person.

Annie: What about living together?

Janice: Living together, yes.

Annie: I mean, just moving your stuff out.

Janice: Yes. Literally, think of how much work that takes. The emotional too. How much work it takes to now go into every room and separate what's yours and what's mine, oh, we bought this together and now let's figure that out. We've been having these friends together and we've been moving as though we were committed forever, but we just didn't commit forever yet. So yes, it makes it infinitely harder, but it doesn't mean it cannot be done. And if the breakup needs to happen, it needs to happen.

Ryan: For me, I think community played a big part in those times in my life where I was going through something like that. I've done it both ways, on my own and with my community. And with my community I was able to see the reality of life. On my own, I was my tunnel vision on the breakup, on the pain. Right?

Janice: I see.

Ryan: And being able to put myself out there and communicate, talk through things and you know, invite other people, those people from my community that I trusted into that heartache. And the speed at which you get over something is-

Annie: It is not linear.

Ryan: It is not linear, yes. But I will say having that community and bringing that community in made it so much easier.

Annie: Is that true for you too, Katie?

Katie: Oh yeah, a hundred percent. I mean, yes. I think my community not only made me feel not alone in it, but they also are the ones that are asking the good questions. Outside of seeing a counselor, they're the ones that are like, So how are you really doing this weekend? Or like, we know that you don't have any plans this weekend. Does that feel hard? Whatever it may be. And making me think through all the feelings. Because I think the other piece of that is I can easily just try to fly by, like let's just, you know, make this as fast as possible-

Annie: Oh, same.

Katie: ...and not acknowledge all of the feelings of it. Not just the sadness, but like there's an embarrassment attached to it. Like, oh, this has just happened again. You know, there's anger, there's all these things. But my community because they're the people that know me the best or the ones that are asking those questions because they know to ask because they know when I'm not me.

Ryan: And they invite that joy in that you don't think exists anymore.

Annie: Will you name some other emotions that we may bump into in breakups that'll be surprising?

Janice: Oh man. Some people, guilt, shame, sadness, fear. You mentioned earlier when you were talking about "yeah when I broke up with that guy there was sadness but there was also the grief of what I was hoping for."

Annie: Even when you're the one who does it.

Janice: Even when you're the one who does it.

Annie: Totally. That's true.

Janice: So I think people might come up against fear. Like if I let this person walk out the door-

Annie: Say it.

Janice: ...will I ever get this opportunity again?

Katie: Hundred percent.

Annie: That's why we stay in situationship.

Janice: That is actually right.

Annie: Because we're like, Well, this is better than nothing.

Janice: That's right.

Annie: But maybe this person will change or maybe someone else will come along, but if they don't, at least I've got someone to make out with, or at least I've got someone to go to the movies with.

Janice: That's right.

Annie: It ain't enough.

Janice: That's right, it's not enough. And so I think once you identify those actual emotions, those are the things that you process with the Lord and with your community. Because what you're saying when you say, I'm afraid that this opportunity won't come again, is you're saying really to a God you believe in that's sovereign and all-powerful, I don't think you have this good thing for me and I want to have that conversation with you. I don't think you have this good thing for me. And if you don't, we're gonna have a problem. So go ahead and have that conversation with Him. You know what I mean?

Annie: Yeah.

Janice: Because that's the one like, "Okay Lord, the time is ticking away, what are you doing?"

Katie: Yeah.

Janice: You know?

Katie: That's Real. I remember thinking after my last breakup that, well, I've only had two serious relationships in my adult life and they were about 10 years apart. And I remember when this last relationship ended, I thought, "Is it gonna be another 10 years before I find another relationship where I feel like there might be the potential?" so it is that feeling of kind of hopelessness that you're like, Are we starting from scratch all over again? And what is the timeline?

But like we talked about before, I mean, marriage is a desire that I have, but it wasn't anything that God ever promised me. So how do I live faithfully holding

both things? You know, I want this, but also this is not what I'm living right now, and how-

Annie: I mean, after my last one, Janice, I was like... I mean, I said to my counselor and to my friends, I was like, "I'm hanging up my jersey. I can't do this again." So, for all of our friends who've hung up their jersey, is that okay? Can we quit trying or are we meant to try again? What do we do if we go, I don't know I can risk that again because I don't know how I pull the plane back up another time.

Janice: I would say that's exactly when you ask the Lord, do I hang up my jersey? Because the temptation is to hang it up so that you don't have to feel this again. Right?

Annie: Or ask questions like, Is it gonna be another 10 years? Or if I break up with this girl, is she gonna marry my best friend? You Know?

Janice: I was thinking about that the other day because I was reading to my kids... It's something to read the Bible to your kids because you realize when you actually read it, like, these stories are not childproof.

Annie: Right. Right. Right.

Janice: These stories are not children's stories. As much as you try to make it in Sunday school. When I was reading a story about Abraham and Sarah and Sarah getting pregnant in her 90s. And I asked the Lord, I said, in my heart I said, "Did she still like it? Was it too late for her?" And from everything that we can read, it was not. The miracle was still a blessing and it was still good. I think if she were writing her own story, she definitely would've written it sooner. Right?

But I think the first step is accepting that we are living out a story that God has written for us and His ways are higher and better. And some of that will feel good, some of it won't, but it will all work for our good. And that's the promise we have to lean into. So I would say don't hang up your jersey just because you don't want to be hurt. The only time you get to hang up your jersey is when the Lord says, "Hey, you know what, hang it up and follow me in this direction." I mean, people ask me a lot, "Are you guys gonna try for a girl?" And I had very-

Annie: Because y'all have two sons.

Janice: Because we have two sons. And I had very traumatic and scary births and deliveries. So we kind of look at each other like, "We're not doing that again." To a degree, I hung up my jersey. My body can't handle it. And then I had a friend challenge me like, "Did the Lord tell you to hang up your jersey?" And I was like, "He didn't but I think I can make this decision for both of us."

Annie: But if He asks me...

Janice: But if He asks me, we think Lord...

Annie: Yeah. We're on this, right, Lord?

Janice: But the reality is, is because I'm scared. So that's then what I have to process with the Lord. And I think it's okay. I don't want anybody to think that they were wrong for saying, Lord, I'm gonna hang up my jersey because as a Porter, I think to myself, no, say that out loud to the Lord so that you can actually get to the emotion so that, like you were saying, you can process it. Because that's what brings more and more intimacy between you and the Lord.

And that intimacy will bring you answers, whether they're the answers you specifically ask for or not. They will bring you answers and guidance. And that will be what you're looking for. You're looking for the guidance. Because even if He said, "Yes, you'll be married, no, you won't be married," what you're looking for is talk to me about how I feel right now because I'm disappointed and I read in your word that I would not be disappointed. So there's a disconnect. Help me with that disconnect. And I think those conversations with God are extremely important in a breakup.

[00:49:30]

Sponsor: Hey friends! Just interrupting this conversation one more time to share about another amazing partner, [Earth Breeze](#). Y'all, doing laundry at my house just got so much easier this spring. My Earth Breeze, laundry detergent, eco sheets, they look like dryer sheets, but they are not. It is the coolest thing. Liquidless laundry detergent that dissolves a hundred percent in any wash cycle, hot or cold. There's no measuring, no accidental spilling, no heavy plastic jugs. Just toss a sheet in and you are good to go. Plus, you're not giving up quality either. Earth Breeze gives you a powerful clean every time. And it smells so good.

Did you know that 91% of those awkward, heavy laundry detergent jugs, oof, end up in landfills and oceans? Y'all, there has to be a better way. Right? This is where Earth Breeze comes in. I'm all about finding ways to be friendlier to the earth. And if I can do that while doing my laundry, I call that a win-win.

It's great for all laundry lifestyles, even sensitive skin. Their eco sheets are hypoallergenic and dermatologist tested. Earth Breeze is compatible with high-efficiency washers, gray water systems and is septic-safe. They offer flexible

subscriptions that can be adjusted, paused, or canceled by you at any time. No contracts or fees.

So give Earth Breeze a try with their risk-free a hundred percent satisfaction guarantee. If you don't like it, Earth Breeze will give you a full refund, no questions asked, and no returns necessary. But I'm telling y'all, I think you're really gonna like it. Switch from the old-fashioned goo to something new.

Right now my friends can subscribe to Earth Breeze and save 40%. Y'all, go to earthbreeze.com/thatsoundsfun to get started. That's earthbreeze.com/thatsoundsfun for 40% off. [Earthbreeze.com/thatsoundsfun](http://earthbreeze.com/thatsoundsfun).

Okay, I have a question. Are you married? I know this series has been talking all about dating and singleness, but so many married friends have emailed in or commented that you are listening to. You're saying it to me when we're out on the road. You're saying it to us on socials. I love it so, so much.

There are 20,000 singles that have been emailing through the whole month of June. And now I want to send something to my married friends to share with you too. It's just one email. That's it. But I'd love to share this with you. So if you're interested, drop your email in the link in the show notes.

And if you're listening to this today, Monday, June 26th, we are sending out the email at 4:00 PM Central. But if you're listening to it later, you can still sign up and get the email. But today it is going out at 4:00 PM Central. So I hope you'll sign up for that. I can't wait to tell you the one thing I just want to tell my married friends.

Okay. Now back to finish up our Summer Lovin' conversation with Janice and Ryan and Katie.

[00:52:09] <music.

Annie: What happens if we want to be married, we keep having breakups and we never get married? What does that say about God? What do we do with God if we never get what we want?

Janice: Man, if we never get what we want, I think that's a question that all of us have to come to terms with.

Annie: About one thing or another, right?

Janice: About one thing or another. Because we were taught in American culture to dream big and go for it. And if you can dream it, you can be it. Because that's once again the American dream. But-

Annie: Is that true for every culture? Is that true for the Black culture like it is the White culture?

Janice: I will say it, it may not be expected in the Black community, but it's definitely aspired to. You know what I'm saying? So we're still moving in that direction. We probably expect different things along the way to come against that.

Annie: So that's pretty American across the... I mean, it is two cultures.

Janice: It's still very American. Because if you think about somebody in an entirely different part of the world where their life is completely rural and you know, they're in a tropical climate and they're just trying to farm and have cattle and live life from day to day, there's a different mindset in how they're thinking of dreams and goals with the Lord and whether the Lord is gonna do what He's promised.

And I think a part of the wealth of America really kind of sets us up for disappointment. Because when you think of what the gospel really says, what the good news says is that, Hey, this place won't be perfect, but I promise I've got a perfect place for you where there is no sin and there is no sorrow and there is no sadness.

Annie: And everybody's married to the Lord.

Janice: Everybody's married to the Lord. So with that, and I know that's a long way around it, and I know there are singles, like, Ugh, please don't give me the Sunday school lesson.

Annie: No, we would need it.

Janice: But the reality is we have an opportunity to say, I want the actual gospel. The people that the gospel gets the most excited are the people who accept that this life is not everything that they dreamed.

Annie: That's good.

Janice: When Mary gets told that she's gonna carry the Son of God, she's a poor woman in a patriarchal society who's like, "Yes, this is good news. Finally, my hope has come." So I think the goal for all of us is to say, my hope is purely in Jesus. So that when he comes, so does my hope. And I think that's what we have to shine against

everything else. There are things that I've wanted along the way. I used to want to be a cardiovascular surgeon. That's different from marriage. But-

Annie: You've covered a lot of careers.

Janice: Yeah. I didn't make that one. Okay? Yeah. That one was not in the cards for me for lots of reasons. One, I can't stay up for 24 hours at a time. Pretty sure I got a touch of narcolepsy because that's not ever gonna happen to me. But I say that to say like, I think we will all get to the end of this having either desired something that didn't come or that we set aside and said, Okay, Lord, I won't be offended by you in that.

Annie: Wow. I want to be blessed and not offended by you. You're not doing it the way I was hoping... kind of like John the Baptist is like, is it you?

Annie: Is it really you?

Janice: Is it really you?

Annie: That's right.

Janice: After knowing that it was Him. I think we all will have the opportunity to not be offended by the Lord in some way. Whether it's relationship, whether it's kids, whether it's job, whether it's finances, whether it's... anything. Anything. I think we'll all have that opportunity.

Katie: I think that's what we need to be reminded of because I'm like, I don't want to get to the end of my life and go, man, marriage was everything. If that's what God gives me, I want to get to the end of my life and say like, "I loved God and I loved His people and I hope that people met God through me." So it feels like marriage is just an added gift if it's given to me. And if it's not, that's okay. But day to day when I wake up and you know, I'm scrolling Instagram and I'm seeing my friends with their families and their husbands, that's where you're like, "Ugh, this stings a little." You know?

Janice: I can understand that. Which is why it's hard for me to say-

Katie: Sure.

Janice: ...as a married woman, it's like, oh, okay, well but you're married. But my father reminded me one day because I was like, yeah, you know. And EJ and I got married and then 30 years from now when we... He said, "You don't know anything about 30 years from now." And I've lived life with girlfriends whose husbands have gone to heaven. And it's like, Right, that was completely unexpected. Completely

unexpected in our friend group." It's one of those things where, like I said, I think we'll all have the opportunity to decide not to be offended by a portion of our story.

Annie: Wow.

Janice: And it'll look different for each of us. That's good.

Annie: No one's like, "You know, I can't wait to get married so that in 10 years he passes away or in 10 years she cheats on me." We watch our friends' lives all the time that are married, them grieving parts of their marriage.

Janice: That's right.

Annie: So it's not an easier path.

Janice: No.

Annie: Listen, I get to do whatever I want with my time. I saw two movies on the same night, Janice.

Janice: What?

Annie: We went and saw one and then we... Regal Unlimited. It helps. Went and saw one and then got a ticket and went and saw the next. So there are things about this season that I can be really grateful for while I'm grieving. I mean, we have to hold both. We have to hold both.

Katie: Absolutely.

Janice: And that is life. That is life. One of the things I have realized as a married woman is that I am trying to get back to time with my girlfriends and I didn't value it like I should have when I was a single woman. It's like now we're all trying to plan trips and meet up somewhere once a year just to be together. It's like when you were together you didn't treasure it. You were so focused on, and then one day we'll be... you know?

Annie: Okay. Ryan or Katie, do y'all have any other questions for Janice while you have this opportunity at this... we have a Porters Call session here that we've had today.

Katie: I don't think so. I feel like we've covered a lot.

Ryan: My question would be—we kind of touched on it earlier—in terms of having dating somebody that has priorities outside of those main characteristics, which ultimately

come down to each different person is gonna have their own priorities in dating and relationships. But how do you offer that grace while you're dating-

Annie: As you're learning things about them?

Ryan: As you're learning things about yourself and about them.

Annie: Yes. Because they're on the other side learning stuff about me too.

Ryan: As I'm asking the question, communicating comes down... I mean communicate how you feel, how you perceived something they said. And if you're early on in a dating relationship, do you end it quickly? Do you-

Annie: Oh man, I just had to chew it out and it was great. We were both like, "You're so great. You're not for me. I wish you well." I mean it was like two and out. We just knew.

Janice: I think that's okay. I think it's okay too when things are still very new if you see something or hear something that's like, you know what? I just don't think we mesh. I think it's okay to say that you're a great person, I'm definitely a great person, and I think, you know, see you around town. I think that's okay.

Annie: The other thing I'd love for you to finish on this, can we miss what God has for us? If we break up with someone that, man, we just do not match on how I feel about cross-stitching, you do not care so we out. And you know, if I end a thing, can I miss what God has for me?

Janice: I personally think and have experienced God's kindness in my life in a way that I don't feel like I've missed anything that He has for me even if I've not seen it yet. So I'll say that even EJ and I, when we started dating we knew. But right before that, I was in a full-blown relationship that we thought was heading towards marriage. And I caught myself being responsible because EJ and I had been best friends for 10, 11 years. I was like, "You know what? I need to distance myself from this male best friend if I'm gonna marry somebody else because that won't work."

So I told EJ that and he was like, "All right." And then I was like, "Wait, wait." And I realized I could live without the guy that I was in the relationship with but I couldn't live without EJ. So I realized all the red flags that had already been in the relationship were in my face. And I was like, "You know what? I should end this because that's the healthiest thing to do. We are not healthy for one another. And I'll spend time grieving and then I'll tell my friend, let's just continue to be friends because that wasn't it." And I did.

And we ended up seeing each other probably about five or six months after that. And that's when we saw each other and knew. But it was like I had cut things off with EJ. We weren't together so it wasn't technically a breakup. But I had distanced myself like, "Hey, I'm dating this guy and this won't be healthy." And God was kind enough to show me in that season, like, "But be honest with yourself. You would miss EJ more than you would miss this guy." And I'm like, "That's true. If being with this guy requires that I can't have my best friend, I don't want to be with this guy."

So then I realized now's the time to break up with this guy. There was nothing else happening. EJ was still living his life, I was living my life. I went home to my dad's house and grieved this guy. It was a horrible grieving because we were attached. There was time and investment. And then I ended up visiting a friend who was a mutual friend of mine and EJ's and I was visiting her in New Jersey and EJ lived in New York City and she said, "On the day you're coming in, I have to do... she was doing PhD work at Rutgers. She was like, "I have a class. Can you hang out with EJ and then I'll meet y'all in the city for dinner?" And that hangout morning was just like, Okay, that's it. This is the guy. My best friend is the guy."

So the Lord was kind enough to, even through my actions, show me myself. So I think this journey with the Lord is just that—a journey. I don't think it's ones and zeros, you did it or you passed, you failed. Wrong turn. Sorry. Now you're on a whole nother path of this video game and you'll never get to the winning slot. You know what I mean? I don't think God is like that.

So I think if it's the case that you break up with somebody and it was your decision and that's still who God has for you, I think in the time between when the Lord brings that person back in obedience as you continue to lean into Him, I don't think that's the end per se.

Annie: Now, if they broke up with you and you still think y'all are supposed to be married... community. Community around you. Otherwise, you're gonna get weird. You're gonna do some weird stuff.

Janice: Whether you're right or not. You could be right, but it's still weird.

Annie: That's right.

Janice: Get with your community because there's still some healing to happen and you still need to choose to be pursued.

Annie: Yeah, that's right. Janice, I would love, we do this very rarely, but I would love for you to end this show. Will you just pray for us? Will you pray for the people who are just hurting or about to do the breaking up or just hanging up their jerseys? We need hope in the midst to breakups.

Janice: Let's pray. Lord, we thank you. We thank you that you're kind. And in this conversation help us to remember that you are a kind God who has good things for us and you make a point to illustrate it for us. And let us know that as your children, you want to give us good things. And so, Lord, I just pray that each of us listening would remember that you are our God, you are our Father, and you have good things for each of us. You are a kind Father who has good things for each of us. Help us to lean into that hope. Help us to lean into what those things are.

I know the culture around us shows us what we should want as good things. Almost like commercials when we're five looking at toys and we're like, "We want that one, we want that one, we want that one." But Lord, I just pray that we would lean into you so that we may begin to expect those good things that you have for us, Lord God. That our conversation would grow more deeper and deeper. And as we speak to you, as we spend vulnerable time with you and are intimate with you, Lord, that we can ask you the hard questions. That we can give you the hard feelings without feeling guilty. That we can communicate with you as our significant other until the one you present to us comes, if they do, if that's what you have.

It's so hard in our culture, Lord, to think that we might not get everything we want. And even saying that sentence, it sounds silly, but it doesn't feel silly. Because it's hard to imagine that we may live a life and not get everything that we want. And still your word says that in you we will not be disappointed. So, Lord, would you close that gap? Would you show us where our expectations are leaning more on culture than your promises? Would you help us to get more of an appetite for your promises, more desire for your promises than what we see in culture? We want what you have for us.

Help us to believe first and foremost that the life that you've planned for us is your best for us and we can't craft anything better. Help us to believe it, God. Even in the places that we haven't given you yet, would you shine a light in those dark corners? I know you'll do it gently and kindly and firmly. And I pray for everybody listening, Lord God, that you would infuse hope into those places where there is hopelessness. Like only you can supernaturally. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Katie: Amen.

Annie: Amen.

Ryan: Amen.

Annie: Thank y'all.

[01:07:53] <music>

Outro: Oh, you guys, aren't they all the best? I so appreciated Katie and Ryan just sharing their stories. I mean, I was profoundly moved by both of them. I thought that was beautiful. And Janice is so brilliant. She is so brilliant. Be sure to follow her on Instagram. Tell her thank you for being here in this series. And you've gotta check out her podcast called Only Gaines with her husband EJ, who I love as well. They are hysterical and so wise.

And for a full list of the resources and Instagram handles from our Summer Lovin' experts, go to anniefdowns.com/dating. We've got one more Summer Lovin' episode this week, and that is it for the month and for the whole series. But don't forget to drop your questions in the link in the show notes because we're going to do a follow-up Q&A episode in the fall. We've already got a lot of questions for y'all, and we are gonna cover them.

If you need anything else from me, you know I'm embarrassingly easy to find, Annie F. Downs on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook. All the places you may need me, that is how you can find me. And I think that's it for me today, friends. Go out or stay home, do something that sounds fun to you. I will do the same. Today what sounds fun to me is getting ready for vacation. I'm starting to pack for our family vacation and I cannot wait.

Y'all have a great week. I cannot wait to hear what you think about this episode. And we'll see you back here on Thursday for our final Summer Lovin' conversation of June with dating coach Jackie Doorman. We're talking about all the things, dating apps, and red flags, and yellow flags. We're kind of covering it all, y'all. You don't want to miss it. We'll see y'all on Thursday.